

**FULL WDB MEMBERSHIP**  
**June 3, 2020**

Conference Call Participants

Les Vail, WDB Chair	Michael Girone, WDB Vice Chair
Michelle Shirey, WDB Executive Director	Tom Bianco, GC Economic Development
Robert DeMarco, NJLWD	Anthony DiFabio, Acenda Health
Katie Doyle, Div. Social Services	Kathy Farinaccio, Business
Thomas Fletcher, Business	Stephen Hart, DWD
Susan Perron, Abilities Solutions	Brigitte Satchell, RCSJ
Stacey Smith, DVRS	Daniel Sulpizio, Business
Patty Claghorn, RCSJ	Kristie Lope, DVRS
Tara Baresel-Dennen, The Arc Gloucester	Cari Burke, Acenda Health
Fran Harwell, FBO	Lisa Cerny, GC Human & Disability Services
Ralph Bingham, GC Library System	Melissa Eckstein, Gateway
Christina Velazquez, GC Planning	Glen Donelson, MASCEC
Stan Hershey, DWD	Jenn Shaw, DVRS
Kim Alexander, GCIT	Kim Gober, GC Housing Authority
Eileen Gallo, WDB Staff	Bridget DiGiambattista, WDB Staff

Les opened the meeting at 8:35 am  
Salute the Flag  
Verification of quorum was made

A motion to approve March 11, 2020 meeting minutes was made by M. Girone, seconded by K. Gober.

**Welcoming Remarks**

Freeholder Simmons thanked everyone for their work with families, businesses, & communities to keep all safe, healthy & positive during this time. She offered thanks to Tom, Michelle, Robert, & Stephen including staff from Economic Development, Workforce Development, and AJC for everything being done on behalf of those filing for unemployment, looking for employment, and working with businesses that are struggling. The small business revolving loan fund, through the Cooperative Business Assistance Corporation (CBAC) the County and Board of Chosen Freeholders has approved paying principle and interest for 3 months for all our borrowers, this includes any CBAC loan they are also carrying with exception of SBA loans. A new loan fund for recovery will be launched in the coming weeks, it is a zero percent loan up to \$20,000 with flexible terms. She thanked H. Stone of CBAC for making these funds available buying the rate down to zero and working with us to provide half-million dollars of funds to Gloucester County businesses. Freeholder reported in her position with Rowan University, they have been working in partnership with Abilities Solutions, Exxon Mobil, & Tool & Die business from Central NJ on manufacturing reusable masks through Rowan University. The Rowan University Office of Development is funding this project and they are manufacturing 50,000 masks to be given away. This project is to kick off Dr. Houshmand's vision of Rowan University becoming a center for research and development in the sustainable domestic reliable supply chain for PPE for both finished products as well as the materials for the products.

### **WDB Updates**

Michelle reported since March 16, 2020, 1 out of 4 New Jersey residents are either unemployed or furloughed, in Gloucester County we have 31,704 residents filed for unemployment. Last week we had 1,398 file new claims for unemployment which was the lowest week since the start of the pandemic. At the height of the pandemic in April, we have 5,000 filing new claims per week. Michelle stated they have seen women and minorities were hit harder due to the industry they were employed. Occupations hit hardest were food services, sales, office, and administration along with retail & hospitality. Some of the things Gloucester County is doing help residents in assisting unemployment claims is the AJC is open virtually and email. We have answered over 1,100 calls assisting customers with UI claims. We are making preparations to open the AJC to the public by providing a draft plan to the State and by putting in plexiglass dividers, provided PPE, etc. We are trying to have a hybrid of virtual and in-person services in late June or early July. A definite date of opening has not to be given by the State. Every two weeks the County is sending out updated new job openings and posted on our WDB website. The State has a new job hiring portal – [www.jobs.covid19.nj.gov](http://www.jobs.covid19.nj.gov) where there are over 52,000 full time and part-time/temporary jobs listed. Michelle thanked B. Satchell, RCSJ as they have been working closely on virtual services and how to deliver them to customers since we do have overlapping customers. RCSJ has the technical ability that we do not have and has done for our customers and WDB.

### **Business Development Updates**

Tom reported as Executive & Administrative Orders are issued, we have forwarded to Mayors/Administrators/Clerks, MEDC, Constant Contact & GC Chamber to keep all informed. Tom said we are working with the County Health Department on regulations for business openings. The GC Dashboard allows businesses to post their basic information like address, phone number, and type of establishment. They can also update delivery, carryout, curbside pickup, or drive-thru options. The site allows residents to search for services in their area and continue to support the places they love.

### **Announcements**

Daniel Sulpizio announced Habitat for Humanity has resumed construction of houses. They are preparing the restore for open, currently, they are doing curbside pickup.

Glen Donelson reported MASCEC continues its food distribution program held every Thursday in Woodbury, located at 28 Harrison St., Woodbury from 2:30-3:30 and average 180-220 people. They run a food distribution every day in Pennsville and have noticed several people from Gloucester County are attending.

Dee Smith announced St. John of God Community Services partnered with the food bank and has a food pantry open. They have a new fundraising executive – Jeff Sanders.

Susan Perron announced Abilities Solutions has been awarded Dept. of Labor Bridges to Employment Program, this program will serve youth with disabilities who are not in school and are ages 16-24. They are working closely with AJC's from Camden, Cumberland, and Gloucester counties, and Susan stated Gloucester is ahead of other counties on what we will do with the grant. Susan stated she has participated in the Access NJ Task Force that put together guidance for other providers to use for reopening. The resource guide is completed and offered to share. She has completed a re-opening guide for Abilities Solutions and again offered to share. Manufacturing at Abilities Solutions has remained open and Bagelicious has remained opened by offering curbside delivery.

Stacey Smith stated Vocational Rehabilitation recently celebrated 100 years. DVRS has continued to provide services to clients throughout this pandemic as long as vendors have been able to provide services.

Anthony DiFabio announced Acenda Health was awarded a 2.3 million 2 year federal grant to bring certified community behavioral health services to Gloucester County. They are offering virtual tele platforms for those needing assistance for anxiety. Acenda Health has over 100 job openings throughout the southern region of the state.

Christina Velazquez reported Public Services Funding through community development block grant RFP 20-042 is out, the funding provides money for literacy, mental health services, homeless prevention, etc. Please visit the County website under professional contracts and request an application. There will be about \$200,000 available to fund at least 5-6 non-profits, the application is due June 17. They received approximately \$800,000 of COVID funding but they are still waiting on guidance from HUD. She does anticipate public hearing within the next 2-3 weeks. Census 2020 RFP 20-40 is out for funding in amounts between \$5,000-\$10,000 mini-grants and is due June 5.

Brigette Satchell reported Workforce Development at RCSJ is offering a series of free online professional development courses. The courses are listed on RCSJ/Workforce Development website to see series of courses listed until June 30.

Kimberly Webster stated Job Corps continues to accept applications for their trade school offering free courses to low-income students ages 16-24.

Daniel Sulpizio announced they will host a virtual Future Bankers Camp this summer for 20 high school students from Camden interested in the financial services industry working in various departments.

A motion for adjournment was made by D. Sulpizio, seconded by S. Hart.

The Full WDB Membership Conference is scheduled for September 9, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bridget A. DiGiambattista, WDB Staff